

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2173

INFO AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, UK

SUBJECT: WOOLWICH BY-ELECTION: TOO CLOSE TO CALL

REF: (A) LONDON 9274; (B) LONDON 9272

1. GALLOP POLL OF GREENWICH, WOOLWICH WEST CONSTITUENCY PUBLISHED JUNE 19 INDICATES LABOR'S 8 1/2 PERCENT MARGIN IN OCTOBER 1974 GENERAL ELECTION HAS BEEN ERODED TO 1/2 OF 1 PERCENT. THIS EROSION, HOWEVER, HAD BEEN EXPECTED. LABOR PARTY OFFICIALS, FROM TRANSPORT HOUSE TO WOOLWICH CONSTITUENCY, CLAIM TO BE HEARTENED THAT DETERIORATION HAS NOT BEEN GREATER AND BY POSITIVE RESULTS OF THEIR OWN CANVASS. LABOR'S PRINCIPAL CONCERNS AT THIS POINT ARE (A) LIKELIHOOD OF NATIONAL RAIL STRIKE (REF B) WHICH THEY FEEL WOULD DESTROY THEIR CHANCES IN THIS RAIL-DEPENDENT COMMUTER COMMUNITY, AND (B) HOW MOST EFFECTIVELY TO EMPLOY SURFEIT OF RESOURCES OTHER THAN FINANCIAL (BY-ELECTION CAMPAIGN SPENDING IS STRICTLY LIMITED BY LAW). THUS FAR WOOLWICH CAMPAIGN IS BEING FOUGHT ON NATIONAL RATHER THAN LOCAL ISSUES, WITH INFLATION GETTING MOST ATTENTION.

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2. LABOR CANDIDATE JOE STANYER CAN COUNT ON EFFECTIVE

CONSTITUENCY ORGANIZATION (WOOLWICH LABOR PARTY IS LARGEST IN UK), FOUR FULL-TIME OFFICIALS FROM LONDON REGIONAL LABOR PARTY, HOSTS OF TRADE UNION VOLUNTEERS FROM LONDON AREA, LEFT AND RIGHT-WING LABOR MPS EAGER TO DO THEIR BIT, CABINET MINISTERS (MICHAEL FOOT AND BARBARA CASTLE WILL HEAD EVE-OF-POLL RALLY) AND ENERGETIC PARTY STALWARTS FROM AS FAR AWAY AS DOVER. DURING EMBOFF VISIT TO CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS QUESTION OF HOW TO UTILIZE BUS LOAD OF DOVER VOLUNTEERS WAS MAJOR CONCERN.

3. CONSERVATIVE PARTY TOO IS MAKING FULL USE OF ITS NON-FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN THIS RACE. PARTY LEADER MARGARET THATCHER IS SCHEDULED TO APPEAR JUNE 21, INDICATING THAT SHE IS WILLING TO STAKE HER PRESTIGE, SAGGING SOMEWHAT AFTER HER LESS THAN IMPRESSIVE SHOWING IN EC REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN, ON THIS TIGHT BY-ELECTION.

4. COMMENT: BARRING A RAIL STRIKE, ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT WOOLWICH BY-ELECTION IS JUST TOO CLOSE TO FORECAST. CRITICAL TEST FOR LABOR WILL BE GETTING ITS SUPPORTERS TO POLLS. THIS IS NEVER AN EASY TASK IN BY-ELECTIONS, AND HAS NO DOUBT BEEN MADE MORE DIFFICULT BY PROXIMITY OF RECENT REFERENCEDUM AND LAST YEAR'S TWO GENERAL ELECTIONS.

RICHARDSON

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